

Metropolitan Council Grant to City Will Assist with Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment of Upper Harbor Terminal Site

7/2/15

In order to get more thorough information about the environmental condition of the Upper Harbor Terminal (UHT) site, the City plans to complete an updated Phase I environmental site assessment (which will look at historical uses to identify any areas of potential concern), an initial hazardous materials survey (to determine if the structures on the site contain asbestos, lead-based paint or other materials of concern) and an initial Phase II environmental site assessment (which will include soil borings/testing informed by the Phase I report).

Based upon the previous uses of the site and the limited investigation to date, the City expects there may be some modest environmental challenges to deal with on the site, but does not expect major environmental issues. This round of assessments will help the City (and Park Board) better understand the environmental condition of the site, plan accordingly and inform potential developers.

To help make this work possible, the City applied to the Metropolitan Council for investigation funding under a new Metropolitan Council program established to encourage investigation and cleanup of sites within areas of concentrated poverty for which a development proposal has not yet been made. This \$32,200 grant was approved by the Metropolitan Council on June 24, and the City Council is expected to consider acceptance of this grant in the second half of July. This program requires a 25% match from the applicant, which will be funded through the 2015 budget appropriation that was already approved for moving the UHT project forward. If fully approved, the assessment reports are expected to be available by fall of 2015.

This new funding program is limited to sites that will be redeveloped for business and/or affordable housing projects, so the portions of the UHT site planned for park redevelopment are not eligible. The City is working with the Park Board and their jointly selected consultant so that the entire site can be tested at the same time, with resulting cost efficiencies. The City and Metropolitan Council funding (if awarded) will be used for the bulk of the work, with the Park Board funding the testing on the portions of the site identified for future park use.